

"To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men - that is genius."
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Donald T. DiFrancesco
Acting Governor

Jane M. Kenny
Commissioner

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VIEWPOINT

REAPing Benefits

by Commissioner Jane M. Kenny

Praise has come from around the state for a DCA property tax reform program that offers both an incentive for local officials to reduce the cost of government and a direct reward for taxpayers in towns that take such actions.

The Regional Efficiency Aid Program (REAP) has become so popular that the number of applications for participation has doubled in a single year.

Taxpayers in towns that have been aggressive in finding ways to lower costs and increase efficiency by sharing services have benefited nicely from REAP. The direct credits to taxpayers range as high as \$362.

Residents not only get a proportional amount of taxes taken off their bills each year. They also enjoy the continuing benefits of a government that has improved the way it does business. We're providing savings to taxpayers whose local governments have acted in their best interests by sharing services.

The glut of government in New Jersey and the duplication of service delivery have contributed to higher property taxes. The incentives under REAP are encouraging towns and schools to consider more efficient ways of meeting the needs of their residents.

The REAP formula gives more weight to towns that make harder choices and generate greater savings. Across the state, nearly 250 municipalities are benefiting from REAP. The actions being rewarded run the gamut from joint police dispatch services to the sharing of public works facilities.

In two years, REAP has returned more than \$35 million in relief to taxpayers. As the word gets out about the potential savings offered by the program, we fully expect more towns to consider ways of reaping the benefits.

Community Matters

A Newsletter for the Employees of the Department of Community Affairs

...In with the New

DCA OK's \$33 Million for Housing



Transformation
Commissioner Kenny uses
the backdrop of a public
housing demolition in New
Brunswick to announce \$33
million in rental housing
funds for New Jersey.

DCA has pooled the resources of two of its popular housing programs to announce the award of \$33 million for 12 affordable family, senior and special needs housing developments across New Jersey.

The rental complexes will be located in the municipalities of Camden, Dover (Morris County), Ewing, Jersey City, Lawrence, Merchantville, New Brunswick, Newark, Salem and Winslow.

In all, a total of 861 units of affordable housing will be constructed.

"We're working to expand the dream of affordable rental housing for families across New Jersey, and we're bringing new life to older neighborhoods in the process," said Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco.

The \$33 million in funding comes from two major state programs that finance affordable housing construction. Approximately \$23 million comes from DCA's Neighborhood Preservation Balanced Housing Program. Another \$10 million comes from the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program, administered by the DCA-affiliated New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (HMFA).

Balanced Housing funds are derived from a dedicated portion of the state's Realty Transfer Fee, a tax on all real estate transactions. The Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program provides federal tax incentives to encourage the construction of rental housing for low-income households.

DCA Commissioner Jane M. Kenny said the projects selected for funding include six family developments, three senior citizens developments and one project to serve the frail elderly. There are also two projects for special needs populations – one for the developmentally disabled and one for the mentally ill.

"This state is committed to providing decent and affordable housing wherever it's needed, for families, seniors and also for people with special needs," said Commissioner Kenny.

The state's \$33 million commitment will leverage \$120 million in total estimated construction spending on the dozen developments, which are being built by both for-profit and non-profit developers.

TV Spot Focuses on Discrimination

DCA Commissioner Jane M. Kenny will be appearing on TV to remind residents of their housing rights as part of a larger outreach campaign to combat housing discrimination.

The Commissioner taped a public service announcement that will air on New Jersey Network and be distributed to cable and paid television stations.

The 30-second announcement reminds residents that it is against the law to refuse to rent or sell housing based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, family status or disability. It also provides a toll free number to call if discrimination is suspected, 1-800-390-4845.

The public service announcement is part of an overall outreach and education initiative financed through a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The initiative will be launched in late August.

Support Specialists Graduate

By Marilisa C. Navarro

Four DCA employees, **Nicole Bocchini**, **Sonia Garcia**, **P. Sunita Hayban**, and **Geraldine Smith**, successfully completed the Support Specialist Program. The Support Specialist Program is a 15-week program that empowers the participant to function in partnership with the manager, maximizing knowledge, skills, and abilities to assume expanding roles brought about by ever-changing organizations.

The Support Specialist Program participants were honored at a graduation ceremony held on Friday, July 27 at the Villa Victoria Academy in Trenton. The Human Resource Development Institute thanks Commissioner Kenny for all of her support.

Key Tool Aids Woodbury Mews

One of DCA's key urban redevelopment tools is being used in the construction of a major senior citizen housing campus in Woodbury.

Officials from DCA and three state agencies participated in groundbreaking ceremonies in July for the Woodbury Mews Senior Campus – a collection of buildings that will provide housing and services for New Jersey senior citizens.

When completed, Woodbury Mews will offer a total of 223 housing units, including 93 assisted living units that include an Alzheimer's wing. The campus will also feature a wellness center, adult day care services and a medical office building. The campus will occupy an entire block of formerly dilapidated buildings.

The initial state commitment to the Woodbury Mews campus came from the New Jersey Urban Site Acquisition (NJ-USA) program, a financing tool created in 1998 to make productive use of underutilized properties. The New Jersey Redevelopment Authority (NJRA) in partnership with the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, the Economic Development Authority and DCA manages NJ-USA.

"The NJ-USA loan provided the jump start needed to put this project on the fast track," said NJRA Executive Director **William Best**.

Under the NJ-USA program, the state assists local governments – working with non-profit and other private organizations – to acquire clear legal title to distressed properties needed for viable redevelopment plans.

Upcoming Events

Aug 28 "Making a Point Without Saying a Word" - Room 521- 12:15 & 1:15

Sept. 25 "Delivering Successful Presentations" - Room 521 – 12:15 & 1:15

*The above presentations are part of the Resource/Learning Lab's (Room 609B) Professional Development Training Lunch & Learn Series. For more information, please contact **Pat Fowler** at 1-3274 or via E-mail.*

Sept. 5 "Dealing With Loss/Illness" - Room 129 – 12pm

Oct. 3 "Financial Planning for College" - Room 129 – 12pm

The Family Work Issues/Employee Interaction Committee is committed to presenting lunchtime sessions of the highest quality and employee interest. To ensure that we continue to meet your expectations, we would appreciate any suggestions you may have concerning the structure/format of the sessions, or your recommendations for future topics.

*If you have any comments or recommendations, or if you would like to serve as a presenter, please notify the Committee's Chair, **Roseanne Rizza** at 2-9847 or via E-mail.*



Distinguished Resident

Commissioner Kenny receives the Distinguished Resident award from her hometown of Highland Park. Borough Mayor Meryl Frank presented the Commissioner with the proclamation.

Training Records Available Online

Employees can now take an online peek at their training record.

DCA's Office of Human Resources reports that the training records are available on HRDI's home page, www.njtrainer.com.

Click on Student Training Transcript Online, enter your Social Security number and print. If you have any discrepancies, contact your Division Training Coordinator for information on how to rectify your record.

Vacuum Cleaner At Your Disposal

DCA has purchased two new vacuum cleaners for use in the building – one is for the use of the cleaning crew and one is available for DCA employees for their clean up needs.

The high-performance vacuums are quiet and eliminate exhaust dust into the work environment due to a sophisticated air filter system.

The vacuum is available in Office Services, Room 115. Please call **Jim Telford** (3-8350) or **Rich Janukowicz** (2-1426).

Phone Reminder

The Office of Human Resources reminds employees that collect calls and *69 calls are prohibited at DCA. Requests for directory assistance should be kept to an absolute minimum. Thank you for your cooperation.

Dress Policy

DCA's Dress Policy provides guidelines that allow employees some flexibility and comfort in their dress without compromising the department's need to maintain a high level of professionalism in the workplace.

According to the policy, DCA employees are expected to wear clothes that are neat, clean and professional in appearance.

There are three basic categories of acceptable dress – business traditional, business casual and casual.

Shortly after her arrival at DCA, Commissioner Kenny designated every Friday as a casual dress down day. But even Fridays have their limits.

On Fridays, employees are permitted to wear casual attire that is clean and in good repair. Business traditional attire should be worn on dress down day whenever employees attend business meetings with external clients.

Examples of acceptable casual attire:

Women – casual slacks, shirts, sweaters, dresses, clean, neat jeans and sneakers, skorts/culottes of reasonable length, or coordinated windbreaker suits.

Men – casual slacks, knit shirts, clean, neat jeans and sneakers, or coordinated windbreaker suits.

Examples of acceptable business traditional attire:

Women – business suits, pants suits, dresses, or skirts with blouses or sweaters.

Men – suits or jackets, dress shirts with collars, tie (optional).

Examples of acceptable business casual attire:

Women – skorts, culottes of reasonable length, casual skirts and dresses, slacks and sweaters/blouses.

Men – shirts with collars, knit shirts, sweaters or casual slacks.

According to the policy, employees should always dress in a manner that reflects respect for themselves and the public they serve, as well as for the department. Therefore, certain clothing is considered inappropriate for the workplace.

Examples of inappropriate attire:

✗ T-shirts with political messages or foul, offensive and/or crude language, expressions or images.

✗ Frayed cutoffs or jeans with holes or rips.

✗ Tank tops or halter tops.

✗ Shorts of any type (shorts being defined as slacks, trousers or pants which end at or above the knee).

✗ Micro-mini skirts or micro-mini dresses.

✗ Beach type footwear, i.e., thongs or flip-flops.

✗ Sweatpants.



Jayne Woodson

Making a House a Home

Many children are alone with no place to call home. That's not the case for 30 children who have been fortunate enough to have **Jayne Woodson** as a foster parent over the last 13 years.

Jayne, a DCA employee in the Division on Women, became a foster parent when she was a participant in the Martin House, an affordable housing program that provides houses to moderate- to low-income individuals. Jayne had two young children of her own at the time, ages 11 and three, but was awarded a five-bedroom home. It was then that Jayne decided that since she

had received her house from the community, she would give something back to the community. She decided to use those two extra bedrooms for foster children that she would take in.

Through the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS), Jayne began her commitment to those children who needed a place to live. Of the 30 children that she has taken in, some have lived with her for as long as two years. The ultimate goal of foster care, however, is to reunite the children with their biological families, so that one never knows how much time the children will have in a foster home.

DYFS offers foster parents stipends for foster and adoption care. It also provides training, including Separation and Loss classes for the foster family so that they will be able to adjust if and when the children return to their biological family.

Through her 13 years of foster care, Jayne said that she has learned selflessness, patience, commitment, and love for children. Over the years, her parents and birth children have helped her with her responsibilities.

Jayne has adopted two children that were once her foster children, now ages nine and 11. She also has two foster children who are nine months and four years old. Jayne is currently in the process of adopting the four-year old. In addition, Jayne has also raised her biological children, now ages 24 and 16.

Jayne said that her commitment to being a foster parent is one that will last a lifetime. Her joy is in knowing that she is making a difference in someone's life. "People always tell me that they [the foster children] need me," said Jayne, "but I need them just as much as they need me."

As Jayne speaks of her children with tears in her eyes, it is obvious that she provides not only a place for these children to sleep, but a home full of love and support.



By Marilisa C. Navarro



Community Building News

Welcome to the new "Community Building/Employee Interest" page. In response to a request by the Public Relations Committee for more space in *Community Matters* for Community Building and employee interest articles, DCA officials have dedicated Page 4 of the newsletter for this purpose.

A number of comments to the last "Question of the Month" asked for feedback from the Community Building Roundtable meetings and updates on the progress of the recommendations. Ask and ye shall receive. We now have a "Roundtable Update/Recommendation Update Corner." We also added some fun stuff as well as articles that we feel would be of interest to staff. You will notice that we have included a feature article on **Jayne Woodson** from the Division of Women. We hope you enjoy reading about Jayne and ask that you forward to us the names of any other employees who have interesting lives outside of work that we can feature in future newsletters.

This page has been created with DCA employees in mind. The Public Relations Committee members are committed to improving communication wherever we can. This page will be as good as its contributors and the feedback we receive. Therefore, we welcome your suggestions and comments. If you should have an article to contribute, please contact any one of the following committee members: **Peggy Fritz, Pat Fowler, Ethel Henderson, or Jim Cordingley.**

DCA History/Trivia Corner

Have you ever wondered why and when the Department of Community Affairs was established? Well, after speaking with our historical expert, **Michael Ticktin** from Codes and Standards, we found out that on Nov. 23, 1966, Governor Richard J. Hughes signed the law establishing DCA. Governor Hughes felt that with the creation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development on the federal level, there was a need to create a state department to, "service more effectively the needs of our communities." The Governor felt that although larger municipalities were, "staffed in a manner which enabled them to deal effectively with State and Federal governments and to obtain full benefit of the programs that are available, many of our smaller communities are losing assistance because they were not properly equipped." The new department would provide these municipalities with assistance. It brought together agencies that had been in the departments of Conservation and Economic Development, Treasury, Law & Public Safety and State.

Dr. Paul N. Ylvisaker, a noted scholar in political science and Director of Public Affairs of the Ford Foundation, was appointed as the department's first commissioner. It was Dr. Ylvisaker's goal as commissioner to find ways to build "a society more rational in governance and more equitable in the distribution of rights and resources."

*The Public Relations Committee will be assembling a group of individuals to talk about DCA history and trivia. Anyone interested in being a part of this group can contact **Pat Fowler** from the Division of Housing and Community Resources at 1-3274 or via E-mail*

Who is this Cutie Pie???



Hint: Can be seen wandering the 6th floor. (Answer in September's Newsletter.)

The Public Relations committee is looking for more childhood pictures. If you are willing to participate, please forward your picture with your name to a committee member. We ask that you are at least 3 years old in the picture and that your face is large enough to be scanned for printing.

Roundtable/Recommendations Update

Recommendation – Create a pilot "Work Circle" project as a means of utilizing cross-functional teams within DCA to create new program models or solve problems that impact work units or large numbers of people within DCA.

A question was posted a number of months ago asking for topics that you would like to see used as a Work Circle. Responses included the following: The future of Community Building; department's mission and values; improve internal communications; improve departmental planning; develop/implement a new system of GRITS, and streamline the personnel action process.

Roundtable asked the Communication/Open Management Committee to review the suggested topics and recommend which one should be used as a Work Circle project. It was decided that the suggestion to improve internal communications within the department would be an excellent topic. Roundtable has approved the recommendation and the committee will begin the implementation process.

Question Results

July's Question – "Let us know why you think there is a lack of interest among the employees regarding Community Building?"

Most of the dozen respondents wrote that employees should be kept informed of the status of the recommendations as well as being provided with feedback from Roundtable meetings. Several expressed the opinion that life has not changed at DCA and one person indicated that, "Mutual respect and pleasant working relationships between employees and managers are on the decline. Peer working relationships are in turmoil and hostile work environments are on the rise."

Recommendations were also made to create a Peer Mediation Group, Labor Management Committee and that employee groups should not be appointed "from above."

As with past questions, all responses have been forwarded to the members of the Community Building Roundtable for review.